



NEWS RELEASE

GOVERNOR'S COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
OCTOBER 23, 2007

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GOVERNOR BREDESEN'S MENTORING INITIATIVE REACHES MILESTONE PROGRAM EXCEEDS MORE THAN 100 VOLUNTEERS AND GROWING

Nashville - More than 100 volunteers from across the state are mentoring teenagers in foster care as part of Governor Phil Bredesen's mentoring initiative.

The initiative was launched by Bredesen in January to help teens in foster care prepare to handle the day-to-day responsibilities of adulthood.

There are currently 147 mentors matched with teens across the state.

Bredesen spoke about the mentoring program in remarks to 100 Black Men of Middle Tennessee in May.

"These mentors may never know the impact the investment of their time and energies will have on the lives of these teenagers," Bredesen said. "All it takes to make a difference in the life of a child is just one person who sees in that young person more than they see in themselves."

Mentors establish ongoing, one-on-one relationships with the teens with which they're paired, serving as stable, positive role models and becoming respected friends.

"Mentors work with teens to set and meet goals, and provide a listening ear when needed," said Tam Gordon, special assistant to Governor Bredesen. "We've already heard several mentors tell how they have helped young people address and overcome the challenges that face them, and that's exactly how the program is supposed to work."

Each mentor agrees to spend at least four hours a month with the young person with whom they are paired.

"We need good folks, from all walks of life, to share some of their time and wisdom with Tennessee's foster care kids," said Bredesen. "Every child needs a steady hand to help guide him or her into independent, adult living. By giving our most vulnerable kids - those living in foster care - that support, we boost their chances of successfully transitioning into the grown-up world."

The Governor's Mentoring Initiative is a project of the Governor's Children's Cabinet. It is operated through a partnership between the Department of Children's Services and Youth Villages, a private, non-profit organization that helps children and their families live successfully.

Adult Tennesseans interested in becoming a mentor must commit to taking a mentoring training class and pass a mandatory background check. Adults wanting to apply for mentorship can call 1-866-519-LIFT (5438) to receive an application, or log on to www.tn.gov/mentoring.

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